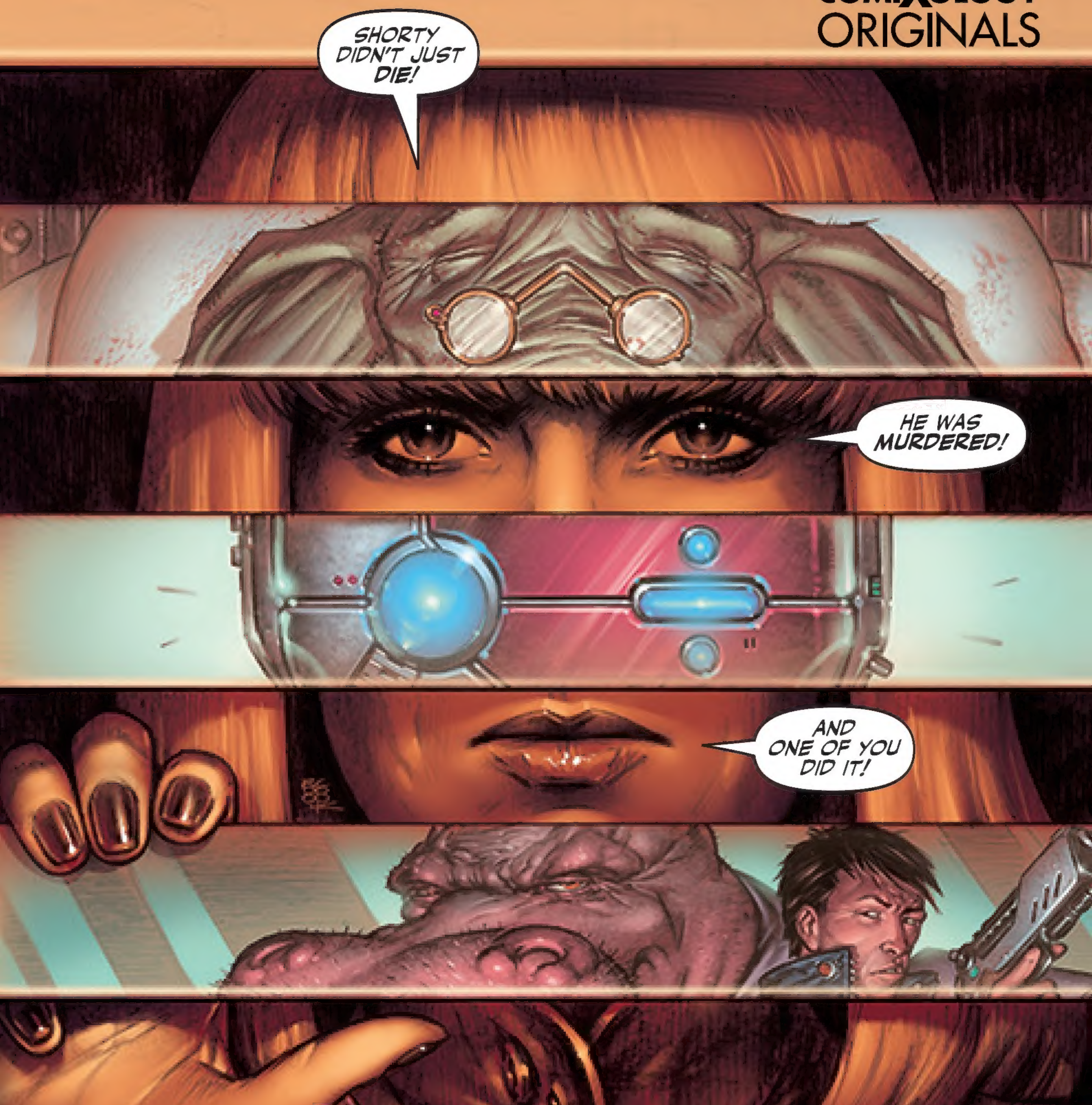
RICHARD STARKINGS · AXEL MEDELLIN

ELEPHANTMEN

COMIXOLOGY ORIGINALS



2261 BOOK ONE

"THE DEATH OF SHORTY"

With JOHN ROSHELL, TYLER SMITH *and* BOO COOK

"COMICRAFT" PRESENTS

ELEPHANTMEN

RICHARD STARKINGS • AXEL MEDELLIN

7761

THE DEATH OF SHORTY

JOHN ROSHELL • TYLER SMITH • BOO COOK

FOR SIMON DAOUDI!
NAM MYOHO RENGE KYO

RICHARD STARKINGS is not only the creator/writer of ELEPHANTMEN but also, co-creator, with Abigail Jill Harding, of ASK FOR MERCY! and co-creator, with Tyler Shainline and Shaky Kane, of THE BEEF. In the course of a distinguished career in comic books, Richard edited a line of original titles for Marvel UK in the 80s, founded the COMICRAFT design and lettering studio in the 90s and established the foremost and most extensive source for comic book lettering fonts at comicbookfonts.com. He has worked as a lettering artist on just about every mainstream comic book you might care to mention -- including BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE -- and has written comic strips for THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS, ZOIDS, TRANSFORMERS and DOCTOR WHO. With Comicraft's Secret Weapon, John Roshell, Richard created the indispensable guide, COMIC BOOK LETTERING THE COMICRAFT WAY as well as the Artist Retrospectives TIM SALE: BLACK AND WHITE and J SCOTT CAMPBELL: TIME CAPSULE. Richard loves Betty's Tearooms, Cadbury's Flake and Lori Perkins, but not necessarily in that order.

AXEL MEDELLIN has been creating art for the ELEPHANTMEN series since 2010. Nevertheless, he has somehow managed to fit in drawing and coloring other comics for HEAVY METAL, Zenescope, Boom! Studios and Image Comics' FIFTY GIRLS FIFTY with Frank Cho. This collection of ELEPHANTMEN features Axel's thousandth pencilled page of the series. Next stop: TWO thousand!

He is probably meeting a deadline right now.

BOO COOK studied illustration at Art college in Cambridge where he felt he was learning a lot as his artistic imagination was beaten out of him – which caused him to retreat to play drums for five years while he spray-painted the unspeakable parts of ceramic beagles at a factory in Scotland. In the year 2000AD he approached the British comics weekly 2000AD with his portfolio and was soon drawing notable characters such as JUDGE DREDD, JUDGE ANDERSON, ABC WARRIORS, HARRY KIPLING, ASYLUM and, most recently, BLUNT for the JUDGE DREDD Megazine. Boo has also illustrated strips for Titan's Doctor Who line and covers for various Marvel books including WOLVERINE. Boo is a talented musician and frequently performs with his bands, FORKTAIL and MOTHERBOX. The cover of issue #5 of comiXology originals' ELEPHANTMEN 2261: THE DEATH OF SHORTY was Boo's fiftieth ELEPHANTMEN cover.

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN 'JG' ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

TYLER SMITH
Design/Production

APPROVED BY THE COMICRAFT AUTHORITY

ELEPHANTMEN: 2261 VOLUME 1: THE DEATH OF SHORTY First Printing. DECEMBER 2018. PUBLISHED BY COMICRAFT INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 2002 AVALON AVENUE, CHATTANOOGA TN 37415. COPYRIGHT © 2018 RICHARD STARKINGS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. "ELEPHANTMEN," ITS LOGOS, AND THE LIKENESSES OF ALL CHARACTERS HEREIN ARE TRADEMARKS OF RICHARD STARKINGS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. "COMICRAFT" AND THE COMICRAFT LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF COMICRAFT, INC. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED, IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS (EXCEPT FOR SHORT EXCERPTS FOR JOURNALISTIC OR REVIEW PURPOSES), WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF RICHARD STARKINGS, OR COMICRAFT, INC. ALL NAMES, CHARACTERS, EVENTS, AND LOCALES IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE ENTIRELY FICTIONAL. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PERSONS (LIVING OR DEAD), EVENTS, OR PLACES, WITHOUT SATIRIC INTENT, IS COINCIDENTAL.

COMICRAFT.COM · FACEBOOK.COM/ELEPHANTMEN · COMICBOOKFONTS.COM · COMIXOLOGY.COM

1

YVETTE

"AND YOU WONDER WHY WE HAVE TO BURN AND CUT YOU?!"

SCANDINAVIA 239

"SCHEREZADE WAS A SWEET GUY, BUT AN INTIMIDATING PRESENCE.

"HE HAD THE MOST MAGNIFICENT TUSKS AND HE TOWERED OVER THE REST OF US.

"SO OF COURSE SOME BRIGHT SPARK GAVE HIM ANOTHER NAME:

"SHORTY."

"HE WAS THE **TOUGHEST**, THE **PROUDEST**, THE **STRONGEST** OF US ALL.

ELEPHANTMEN: THE DEATH OF SHORTY

NO...

"BUT HE HAD THE BIGGEST **HEART** TOO.

WHAT KIND OF *VILE CREATURE DOES* THIS?

IS IT NOT ENOUGH TO STRING US UP AND LET US BE EATEN ALIVE BY *RATS* AND *CROWS*...

THIS MONSTER HAS TO *SIGN* HER WORK AS WELL?

HOW THEY MUST HAVE *SUFFERED*.

WE ALL HAVE *PAIN SUPPRESSORS* ATTACHED TO OUR *SPINES* -- THEY WOULDN'T HAVE FELT A THING.

SUFFERING ISN'T JUST ABOUT PAIN IN THE *BODY*...

SNAP OUT OF IT, THESE MEN ARE *FRESH* KILLS.

WE CAN STILL CATCH YVETTE! *LET'S GO!*

NO... WE HAVE TO TAKE DOWN THESE MEN AND *BURY* THEM.

SERIOUSLY? THERE IS NO TIME FOR SUCH NONSENSE.

I AM MAKING TIME.

I AM BURYING THESE MEN.

THEN STAY BEHIND. KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.

"I STAYED WITH SHORTY.

"WE DUG GRAVES FOR SIX HOURS.

"SHORTY STOOD SILENTLY AT THE BURIAL SITE FOR ANOTHER HOUR AT LEAST.

NOW *THERE'S* SOMETHING I HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.

THEY'RE BURYING THEIR DEAD.

NOT THAT IT CHANGES ANYTHING.

LET'S GO.

PDP PDP PDP PDP PDP PDP

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

HORSES.

THE PEOPLE WHO DID THIS ARE *STILL HERE!*

YVETTE? YOU THINK SHE'D BE THAT *FOOLISH?*

SURELY SHE'D BE LONG GONE?

NO. SHE'S STILL HERE. TO WITNESS THE EFFECTS OF HER SAVAGERY.

THEY'RE FOLLOWING US!

LET'S SEE HOW THEY KEEP TRACK OF US IN THE *FOREST*.

THERE! PUT ME DOWN.

"I SHOULD HAVE STOPPED HIM, OR AT LEAST STOPPED HIM FROM GOING ALONE.

HANG BACK. I'LL CONTACT YOU WHEN I NEED YOU.

"BUT YOU KNOW THE OLD JOKE, RIGHT?

"WHAT DO YOU GIVE A TEN FOOT TALL ELEPHANTMAN WITH A MACHINE GUN?

"ANYTHING HE WANTS."

"HE PROBABLY THOUGHT: 'SHE'S BARELY **HALF** MY SIZE AND A **FRACTION** OF MY **WEIGHT**...'"

"IT'S LIKE HE'D FORGOTTEN **WHAT** SHE'D DONE, HE WAS SO CONCERNED WITH **WHY** SHE HAD DONE IT...

HEY!

STOP! YOU CAN'T OUTRUN ME... I JUST WANT TO *TALK* TO YOU.

"HE COULD HAVE SNAPPED HER IN TWO LIKE A **TWIG** IF HE WANTED TO..."

"**MAPPO** HAD LED US TO BELIEVE THAT ALL HUMAN FEMALES WERE **WEAK**, SUITABLE ONLY FOR **BREEDING**."

I WILL GUARANTEE YOU A ***SWIFT***, *PAINLESS* DEATH...

A BETTER ONE THAN YOU *DESERVE*...

"WHAT WAS THERE TO FEAR?"

YOU THINK THAT I DESERVE TO DIE?

FOR WHAT?

FOR FIGHTING BACK? FOR KILLING THE KILLERS OF MY FAMILY?

FOR TORTURING OUR SOLDIERS.

I ONLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY...

PLEASE, LOWER YOUR GUN.

YOUR BULLETS WILL BARELY GRAZE ME.

AND YOU WONDER WHY WE HAVE TO BURN AND CUT YOU?!

UNDERSTAND THIS...

I WILL DO ANYTHING I CAN TO HURT YOU.

ANYTHING TO CAUSE YOU TO FEAR US THE WAY WE FEAR YOU!

CLK

CLK

CLK

CLK

I HAVE YOU NOW.

BRING IT ON, I'LL KILL YOU WITH MY *BARE HANDS!*

WAIT.

THIS IS A *TRAP?*

THT

KLAK

KLAKT

OH

THT THT THT THT THT

SHRA

KRSH

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY WE DO THIS? BECAUSE WE WANT TO *SURVIVE*.

BECAUSE YOU COME HERE WITH YOUR *BIG GUNS* AND YOUR *ARMOR* AND WE HAVE *PISTOLS* AND PIECES OF *WOOD*.

AND I WANT YOU TO FEEL WHAT *I FEEL*. I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN FEAR.

MAYBE THIS WAY YOU BECOME A LITTLE MORE HUMAN...

SHORTY!

BRAKATABRAKATABRAKATABRAKATA

MERDE!

PT PT PT

THAT ONE IS A DETERMINED SON OF A BITCH!

HE CAN BURY HIS FRIEND LIKE THEY BURIED THE OTHERS. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

PTNK PTNK

SHUMMM

SHORTY! STAY STILL! YOU'RE SEVERELY WOUNDED!

I JUST WANTED TO UNDERSTAND...

I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR, BUDDY.

MEDIVAC IS ON THE WAY.

"THEY HAD HIM IN A RESTORATION TANK WITHIN TWO HOURS. HE LIVED, BUT HE NEVER LOOKED THE SAME AGAIN..."

...AND YVETTE... WELL THAT'S A WHOLE OTHER STORY.

LOS ANGELES
2261

WE USED TO COME HERE EVERY MONTH TO PLAY POKER. YEARS AGO NOW THOUGH.

HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S DEAD. IT'S A SHAME WE... LOST TOUCH.

AND WHAT *KILLED* HIM?

AREN'T YOU LOT PRETTY MUCH *IMMUNE* TO DISEASE?

NATURAL CAUSES, I'LL BET. HIS *HEIGHT*. HIS *HEART* HAD TO WORK SO MUCH *HARDER* THAN MINE.

HIP FLASK, JACK FARRELL. WE'RE HERE TO PAY OUR RESPECTS.

+++ PLEASE FOLLOW ++ ME+

POOR GUY.

"POOR"?

LOOK AT HIM.

HE LOOKS SO *PEACEFUL* NOW.

HOW DOES AN ***ELEPHANTMAN*** ACQUIRE ***WEALTH*** LIKE THIS? I KNOW YOU GUYS ARE ***SUBSIDIZED*** BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THIS PLACE SMELLS OF ***MILLIONS*** OF DOLLARS.

WAS HE *SUFFOCATED* BY HIS ***MONEY?***

+++ NOT ++ SUFFOCATED + NO +

+++ BUT MISTER SCHEREZADE ++ DIDN'T DIE OF ++ **NATURAL CAUSES** EITHER +++

+++ HE WAS ++
MURDERED! +

PRESS

2
DILLON

+++ THIS ONE FOUND RATS +
+ MUCH LIKE + HUMANS +
+ ALWAYS HUNGRY + ALWAYS DIRTY +
ALWAYS + THINKING
+ ONLY OF + THEMSELVES +

RATS!

"THAT'S RIGHT. RATS..."

SHORTY *HATED* RATS.

I BET IF ONE WALKED ACROSS HIS CHEST RIGHT NOW, HE'D COME BACK FROM THE *DEAD*.

YELLING: *"GET IT OFF ME!"*

+++ YES ++ THIS ONE MIGHT EVEN SAY **MISTER SCHEREZADE** WAS ++ **HAUNTED** BY THEM +

+++ HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE THE ++ **DEATH** OF HIM +

+++ BUT **THEY** ++ DID NOT **KILL** HIM +

+++ **MISTER SCHEREZADE** ++ LEARNED TO **LOVE** RATS +

IS THAT RIGHT, BUDDY?

+++ THAT ++ IS **CORRECT** + SIR +

AND YOU'RE CLAIMING HE WAS ACTUALLY *MURDERED?*

+++ YES ++ SIR +

AND *WHO, OR WHAT,* EXACTLY *IS "THIS ONE"?*

+++ THIS ONE WAS GIVEN THE NOMENCLATURE ++ DILLON +

HMM. Y'KNOW, YOU'RE *TALL* ENOUGH TO *BE* THE MURDERER.

+++ MY APOLOGIES ++ HERE +++

PRESS

+++ PLEASE ++ ALLOW ME TO MAKE ++ THE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS +

VTT VT VT VT VT

+++ IS THIS ++ BETTER FOR YOU ++ MISTER FLASH? +

VT VT VT VTT

NEAT TRICK, "DILLON"...

BUT YOU CAN CALL *THIS* ONE, MISTER *FARRELL*...

YOU CAN CALL THIS *OTHER ONE*, FLASK.

HE KNOWS WHO THIS ONE IS.

FOCUS, HIP. *WATCH* AND *LEARN*...

LET'S JUST CALL THE COPS, JACK.

SO, DILLON, WHAT KIND OF *DROID* ARE YOU?

+++ THIS ONE ++ IS AN ++ EXTERMINATOR +

FARRELL! WHOA!

YEP, JUST LIKE I THOUGHT. IT'S *ALWAYS* THE ROBOT...

+++ THIS ONE ++ EXTERMINATES **RATS** + NOT **HUMANS** + OR **TRANSGENICS** +

RATS, FARRELL. EXTERMINATOR DROIDS WON'T KILL ANY OF ***US***, IT'S THE FIRST LAW OF ***ROBOTICS***.

+++ THIS OTHER ONE IS ++ **CORRECT** + A ROBOT MAY NOT **HARM** HUMANITY + OR, BY INACTION, ALLOW HUMANITY TO COME TO HARM +

+++ ELEPHANTMEN ++ WOULD DO WELL TO CONSIDER ++ THIS SIMPLE PRINCIPLE ALSO +

CUTE.

+++ THIS ONE KNEW MISTER ++ SCHEREZADE VERY WELL +

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE NEVER SLEPT ++ **PEACEFULLY** +

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE OFTEN HAD ++ DREAMS + OF RATS +

+++ HE WAS AN ++ EXTERMINATOR TOO +

+++ THIS ONE FOUND RATS ++ MUCH LIKE + HUMANS +

SQUEE

SQUEE

+++ ALWAYS HUNGRY ++ ALWAYS DIRTY + ALWAYS + THINKING + ONLY OF + THEMSELVES +

SQUEE SQUEE

+++ ALWAYS SEEKING TO INSPIRE ++ FEAR + IN OTHERS +

AHHHHHH

SQUEE SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

+++ CARING ++
NOTHING + FOR THE
+ CONSEQUENCES +

DILLON!
GET THEM OFF ME!
GETTHEMOFFME!
GETTHEM
OFFME!!

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEE

SQUEEEEEEEEE

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE ++ "SHORTY" + WAS ++ OVER + TEN FEET + TALL +

+++ BUT SOMEHOW ++ RATS MADE HIM FEEL + SMALL +

ZUUUUU

EEEEEEEEE

EEEEE

EEEEEEEE

+++ HE DEPENDED ++ ON THIS ONE +++

ZZZK!

ZZZK

+++ TO LOOK OUT ++ FOR HIM +

+++ TO CARRY OUT ++ THE EXTERMINATIONS +

ZZZK

ZZZK

ZZZK

+++ IN MUCH THE SAME WAY + + THAT MAN + DEPENDED ON ELEPHANTMAN + DURING THE WAR +

+++ TO EXTERMINATE + + PESTS +

PRESS

I SHOULD *THANK* YOU, DILLON.

I HATE RATS, BUT THEY ARE ONLY DOING WHAT COMES *NATURALLY* TO THEM.

"THEY FEASTED ON THE FALLEN ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELDS OF EUROPE... MAN *AND* ELEPHANTMAN...

"THEY SAW NO DISTINCTION."

WHY *WOULD* THEY? NEITHER MAN NOR ELEPHANTMAN WOULD HESITATE TO KILL *THEM*.

"JUST AS MAN DIDN'T HESITATE TO KILL MAN.

"JUST AS ELEPHANTMAN DIDN'T HESITATE TO KILL MAN.

AND NOW WE KILL *RATS.*

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE + + RATS SPREAD **DISEASE** + DEPLETE AND **INFECT** *FOOD* RESOURCES +

+++ IT IS SIMPLY A MATTER ++ *OF* THE **SUPREMACY** *OF* SPECIES +

+++ RATS DIE ++ A **FLY** LAYS EGGS IN + ITS **CORPSE** +

+++ MAGGOTS ++ EAT THEIR HOST +

+++ MAGGOTS BECOME FLIES ++ THE CYCLE CONTINUES +

+++ HUMANS CONTROL + + FOOD SOURCE + +++ HUMANS DESTROY **VERMIN** ++ CULL + **PREDATORY SPECIES** +

+++ **INFERIOR** CREATURES CAN ONLY +++ EAT WHAT HUMANS ALLOW +

+++ HUMANS REMAIN **SUPERIOR** ++ ONLY IF THEY REMAIN + **VIGILANT** +

ZIZIK

DILLON! THAT WAS TOTALLY *UNNECESSARY.*

+++ **UNNECESSARY ?** + + MISTER SCHEREZADE + SURELY + **ALL** *OF* THIS IS + UNNECESSARY +

+++ WHAT IS **ONE** + + MORE LIFE + WHEN + WE ARE RESPONSIBLE + FOR THE EXTERMINATION + *OF* === **CALCULATING** ==

THANK YOU, DILLON, I REALLY DON'T NEED TO KNOW THE *EXACT* NUMBER.

BUT I AM GLAD YOU *REMINDED ME* OF THE QUESTION THAT WE MUST ALWAYS ASK OURSELVES, MY FRIEND...

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A *SINGLE* LIFE?

DURING THE WAR, *MAPPO SCIENTISTS* TRIED TO NEUTRALIZE OUR ABILITY TO EMPATHIZE, TO *REASON*...

THEY ATTACHED DEVICES TO OUR BRAINSTEMS...

"TINY *ROBOTS* THAT MONITORED OUR *DOPAMINE* LEVELS, OUR *BLOOD PRESSURE*...

"THESE CREATURES ENSURED THAT RAGE AND ANGER, ALL OUR MORE *VIOLENT* TENDENCIES, ALWAYS TRIUMPHED OVER OUR MORE SYMPATHETIC... *HUMANISTIC* INSTINCTS...

"THEY CALLED THESE THINGS *IMPERIUMITES*. AN EXTENSION OF A WORD THAT MEANS *SUPREME POWER*. HUNH. SO *ARROGANT*. SO *FOOLHARDY*.

"MAPPO GAVE US THE POWER TO TAKE LIFE AS WE SAW FIT.

"WE WERE A *RUTHLESS INVASIVE* SPECIES.

"AND WHAT DO I DO NOW?"

I *KILL* INVASIVE SPECIES.

WITH A ROBOT ASSISTANT.

DO YOU SEE THE IRONY, DILLON?

+++ THIS ONE ++ **UNDERSTANDS** THE IRONY + BUT IS NOT + **PROGRAMMED** + TO HAVE AN **OPINION** + IN THIS REGARD +

DILLON, GIVE ME YOUR LEFT HAND.

EXTEND YOUR EXTERMINATION DEVICE...

RRRRRRNNNNNN

THIS DEVICE *ELECTROCUTES* YOUR TARGETS...

BUT YOU HAVE A *SECOND* DEVICE WHICH DESPATCHES SMALL DROIDS THAT *TRACK* RATS TO THEIR *NESTS*...

WHERE ARE THOSE DROIDS *STORED?*

+++ HERE + + IN MY CHEST + CAVITY +

PRESS

I HAVE AN *IDEA*...

+++ IN THE ++ EARLY 21ST CENTURY + ANXIOUS CAT OWNERS + PAID A SMALL PRICE + TO MONITOR THEIR PETS WITH THE + ASSISTANCE OF SMALL DEVICES ATTACHED + TO THE BASE OF THEIR SKULLS +

+++ THE **IMPERIUMITE** ++ WHICH CONTROLLED THE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OF + ELEPHANTMEN UTILIZED + THIS SAME TECHNOLOGY +

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE ++ BELIEVED THAT THE TECHNOLOGY + COULD BE PUT + TO YET **ANOTHER** PURPOSE +

+++ HE SET ABOUT + + THE TASK OF RETOOLING + THIS ONE'S **INTERNAL MECHANICS** +

XTERMX

+++ THIS ONE WAS NOT AWARE ++ OF **HOW LONG** THE PROCESS TOOK + THIS ONE'S **INTERNAL CLOCK** + WAS **RESET** DURING THE + PROCEDURE +

+++ HOWEVER + + WHEN THIS ONE WAS + REACTIVATED + IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THIS ONE'S INTERNAL MECHANISMS HAD BEEN + MODIFIED +

+++ THIS ONE + + WAS STILL PROGRAMMED + TO HUNT DOWN VERMIN +

+++ BUT WITH + + NEW TOOLS +

FFFT

FPT

SQUEE SQUEE

TK

TK

FT

FT

FT

FPT

FPT

SQUEE

SQUEE
TK
TK
FPT
SQUEE
TK
FPT
SQUEE

+++ AND WITH + + NEW RULES +

+++ NEW ++ DEVICES + ATTACHED THEMSELVES + TO THE BRAINSTEMS OF EACH RAT + MUCH LIKE MAPPO'S IMPERIUMITES +

+++ HOWEVER ++ RATHER THAN + STIMULATE AGGRESSIVE IMPULSES + THESE DROIDS SUPPRESSED ANY SUCH + REACTIONS +

+++ SEE HOW + + THEY + RUN? +

+++ ALLOWING ++ MISTER SCHEREZADE + TO OFFER NEW DIRECTIVES AND + CREATE + NEW PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR +

HEH HEH. YES, I'M SORRY DILLON, I *KNEW* YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT...

I COULDN'T RESIST ADDING IT TO YOUR SUBROUTINE..

SQUEE
SQUEE
SQUEE

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE + + SEEMED INORDINATELY PLEASED + WITH HIS ACHIEVEMENT +

THERE. LOOK AT THEM, DILLON. THEY'RE ALIVE... ALIVE, AND *FREE*.

SQUEE

SQUEE SQUEE

DO YOU *SEE*, DILLON? IT *ISN'T* NECESSARY TO *KILL* THEM, JUST LIKE YOU SAID...

THEY CAN LIVE, AND BE FREE.

+++ THIS ONE + + FELT COMPELLED TO POINT OUT +

+++ AND YET + + STILL VERMIN + MISTER SCHEREZADE +

OH, SHORTY. BLESS HIS COTTON SOCKS...

YEAH, THAT'S LIKE, *WAY* TOO MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT *RATS*...

IT DOESN'T TELL US WHO *KILLED* SHORTY HERE...

IF YOU THINK YOUR FRIEND HERE WAS *MURDERED*, WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL THE L.A.P.D?

+++ THIS ONE + + WAS GIVEN + STRICT INSTRUCTIONS +

BECAUSE I TOLD HIM *NOT* TO...

BECAUSE, DARLING, THE MURDERER *IS STILL IN THE BUILDING!*

3

Sapphire

"I knew the Elephantmen were
Hated and Feared,
I just didn't realize...
How Much."

"PERHAPS YOU MIGHT FIND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT **SCHEREZADE** AND I WERE CLOSE... **VERY** CLOSE."

"I WOULD EVEN SAY OUR FRIENDSHIP WAS **INTIMATE**, BUT I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT IT WAS ALSO ENTIRELY **FRATERNAL**.

"**SHERRY**, AS **I** CALLED HIM, WASN'T **THAT** KIND OF ELEPHANTMAN, HE WAS **ALWAYS** A **GENTLEMAN**.

"AND, OBVIOUSLY, I WASN'T **THAT** KIND OF GIRL, NO MATTER WHAT YOU -- OR **ANYONE ELSE** -- MIGHT THINK.

"I'M SURE YOU KNOW THAT HE SOLD THE PATENT FOR HIS **PIED PIPER** SOFTWARE FOR A SMALL **FORTUNE**.

"I'M TOLD IT WAS **ALL OVER THE NEWS**...

"SO SHERRY BOUGHT A NEW BUSINESS...

"NEW AND ANTIQUE PERSIAN AND ORIENTAL RUGS.

"WHEN HE BOUGHT THE STORE, IT WAS IN **FREEFALL**, CLOSE TO **BANKRUPTCY**.

"SHERRY TURNED IT AROUND, HE HAD **EXCELLENT** TASTE, NATURALLY.

"AND PEOPLE LOVED **HIM. SCHEREZADE RUGS AND EXOTIC IMPORTS** WAS **THE** PLACE TO BE.

"SO, OF COURSE, THAT'S WHERE WE MET.

HOLD ON HOLD ON...

LOS ANGELES
2261

SLOOOWWW DOWN...

I MEAN...

I *WANT* TO HEAR YOUR STORY, I REALLY DO...

BUT I'VE GOT, LIKE *FIVE* QUESTIONS I'D LIKE TO *ASK* BEFORE YOU START ANSWERING ONES I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT...

ONE:

IF YOU THINK ***SHORTY'S MURDERER*** IS STILL IN THE ROOM, FROM WHERE I'M STANDING IT'S EITHER ***YOU*** OR THE RAT-CATCHING ROBOT THAT'S BEEN TALKING OUR EARS OFF.

TWO:

IS THERE ANYONE ELSE BACK HERE WHO *HASN'T* REVEALED THEMSELVES? WE *MIGHT* NEED MORE *SUSPECTS*.

THREE:

IS THERE A ROOM WHERE WE CAN TALK THAT *DOESN'T* HAVE A *CORPSE* IN IT?

AND *FIVE*:

WHO THE HECK ARE YOU ANYWAY?

I'M SORRY. MY NAME IS *SAPPHIRE*.

PLEASE, THIS WAY. WE CAN TALK IN THE *DINING ROOM*.

DILLON, LET *THOMAS* KNOW WE HAVE GUESTS FOR *TEA*.

PSST. FARRELL. THAT WASN'T *FIVE* QUESTIONS. YOU SKIPPED *FOUR*, YA IDJIT.

AND IF THIS *IS* A MURDER, WE HAVE TO GET THE L.A.P.D OUT HERE, PRONTO.

"WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL THE COPS?" IS QUESTION FOUR, FLASK. I'M GETTING THERE.

+++ KITCHEN? + + THREE FOR + + HIGH TEA +

+++ YES + + NOW + + THOMAS +

THIS IS HIS DINING ROOM?

OF COURSE.

AS I WAS SAYING, SHERRY WAS A MAN OF GREAT TASTE *AND REFINEMENT.*

AND *MONEY.*

+++ THREE FOR + + TEA? +

+++ SHOULD I ALSO FETCH SOME CAKES AND FANCIES + + MISS SAPPHIRE? +

COFFEE FOR ME, BUD.

YES, SOME CAKES WOULD BE MOST WELCOME, THOMAS.

DANG. THERE GOES MY WAISTLINE AGAIN.

SKTT

SO, NOW THAT WE HAVE OURSELVES A TEA PARTY, YOU WERE SAYING...?

YES. SHERRY WAS THE KINDEST *GENTLEST*, MAN, OR ELEPHANTMAN, I EVER KNEW...

"HE CONSTANTLY SOUGHT OUT MY COMPANY, AND I SOUGHT OUT HIS...

"WE OFTEN WALKED OUT ON THE TOWN TOGETHER...

"SHERRY DIDN'T WANT CELEBRITY LIKE SOME OF YOUR KIND...

"PHILOSOPHICALLY, HE KEPT HIS HEAD DOWN.

"BUT IF I HAD QUESTIONS, HE ANSWERED THEM.

"AND IF HE SAW SOMETHING HE THOUGHT I'D LIKE, HE POINTED IT OUT TO ME.

"HE DIDN'T TALK MUCH ABOUT **THE WAR**, HE DIDN'T SEEM TO THINK ABOUT IT AT ALL...

SHORTY?

DADDY SAYS THAT IF AN ELEPHANT STAMPEDES, IT CAN KILL YOU.

"THE ELEPHANTMEN HE COUNTED AMONGST HIS FRIENDS WERE GENTLE AND KIND, MUCH LIKE HIMSELF...

GRANGER! HOW'S THE RAG TRADE?

WAITING FOR ***YOU*** TO PLACE A NEW ORDER. YOU KNOW YOU'RE MY ***BEST*** CLIENT!

CUSTOM-MA
CLOTHING & S

"LITTLE WONDER WE NEVER RAN INTO YOU, MISTER FLASK...

MAYBE HE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT ***POKER NIGHT***.

ALTHOUGH I HAD NO INTEREST IN OLD WAR STORIES, NEVERTHELESS, I ASKED HIM QUESTIONS...

I ASKED HIM ABOUT ***THE ELEPHANTMEN.***

"I KNOW WHAT THEY PUT YOU THROUGH.

ABOUT HOW YOU ALL CAME HERE FROM ***AFRICA,*** IN ***CHAINS...***

*"I KNOW YOU WERE ALL **REGISTERED**, ONE-BY-ONE, HERE IN AMERICA.*

"AS IF THAT WASN'T HUMILIATION ENOUGH, THEY FORCED HIM TO KNEEL...

SOMEONE WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO BRING HIM DOWN TO SIZE.... HE TOLD ME HE WAS JUST HAPPY TO BE FREE.

*"DON'T TELL ME THAT ISN'T TRUE... WHEN THEY GAVE HIM A JOB. THEY SENT HIM INTO THE **SEWERS** TO EXTERMINATE **RATS.***

UHH... CAN I TAKE A BREAK, Y'KNOW, USE THE BATHROOM?

I'M TELLIN' YA, *ONE* SIP OF TEA... *EVERY TIME...*

OF COURSE. *DILLON...?*

+++ PLEASE + + FOLLOW ME +

I THINK I CAN REMEMBER THE WAY...

VTT VT VT

VT VT

?

DOES WEALTH BOTHER YOU, MISTER FARRELL?

ONLY WHEN IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S.

DID YOU JUST GROW A COUPLE OF FEET?

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE TOLD THIS ONE + + THAT GUESTS ARE MORE COMFORTABLE + IF THEY CAN LOOK THIS ONE + IN THE EYE +

YOU'D THINK HIPPOS WOULD HAVE *BIGGER BLADDERS.*

IZZAT SO?

+++ THIS ONE + + HAS FOUND THAT + TO BE THE CASE +

+++ THE EYES + + ARE THE WINDOWS + OF THE SOUL + MISTER FLASH +

AH, YES THE *MUDBATH ROOM*. SHORTY SURE LIKED HIS *CREATURE COMFORTS*.

I LOVED THIS PLACE. I LOVE MUD. AND THAT'S *A LOT OF MUD*.

+++ THE TOILETS + + ARE TO YOUR RIGHT +

A MAN COULD *DROWN* IN ALL THAT MUD...

A MAN, OR AN *ELEPHANTMAN*...

Y'KNOW, WE SHOULD GET *FORENSIX* OUT HERE.

IF, LIKE YOU AND THE LADY SAY, SHORTY WAS *MURDERED*...

+++ YOU ARE + + RIGHT +

+++ A MAN COULD + + DROWN IN HERE +

PRESS

+++ PLEASE + + AVAIL YOURSELF OF OUR ++ FACILITIES +

+++ THIS ONE WILL WAIT + + RIGHT HERE +

I'M *GOOD*. I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY BACK.

+++ MISS SAPPHIRE + + WAS VERY **INSISTENT** +

+++ NEITHER YOU + + NOR YOUR PARTNER + WAS TO BE LEFT + ALONE +

IZZAT SO?

PRESS!

L.A.P.D? I'M CALLING FOR COMMISSIONER HOMSI...

HELLO? L.A.P.D?

+++ YOUR CALL + + CANNOT BE COMPLETED AS + DIALLED +

PRESS

+++ PLEASE HANG UP + + AND TRY AGAIN + LATER +

CUTE.

Y'KNOW, I COULD BURY YOU IN THE MUD HERE...

+++ OR + + THIS ONE + + COULD BURY + YOU +

I REMEMBER YOU, Y'KNOW.

+++ THIS ONE + + REMEMBERS YOU + TOO +

+++ MISTER + + FLASH +

PRES

I REMEMBER WHAT YOU DID LAST TIME I WAS HERE.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

+++ SHALL WE ++ RETURN + TO THE DINING AREA + ?

+++ YOUR + + DRINK + SIR +

UH, SAY WHAT?

+++ IT'S + + FRENCH PRESS + SIR +

DUDE, I ASKED FOR *COFFEE?*

THOMAS, JUST POUR IT INTO A PLAIN MUG FROM THE KITCHEN...

...ADD A TABLESPOON OF ***SUGAR*** AND BRING IT BACK TO HIM.

EVEN WITH ALL THIS MONEY, SHORTY COULDN'T GET DECENT HELP?

OR DECENT COFFEE?

QUITE THE CONTRARY, MISTER FARRELL.

SHERRY INSISTED ON ***THE BEST*** FOR EVERYONE TO WHOM HE CONSIDERED A FRIEND.

"HE BROUGHT ME BACK HERE JUST A FEW WEEKS AFTER WE FIRST MET..

"TOOK ME UP TO HIS ROOFTOP PARK TO LOOK AT THE **STARS.**

"ON THAT PARTICULAR NIGHT, ONE WAS EVEN FALLING FROM THE SKY.

A SHOOTING STAR!

IT'S GOOD LUCK! *MAKE A WISH!*

OR A ***BAD OMEN...*** I WISH WE LIVED... IN A SAFER WORLD...

IF THAT FALLS INTO SANTA MONICA BAY...

IT *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL *ROMANCE*...

BUT SHERRY WAS RIGHT, THE METEOR WAS AN OMEN OF DISASTER. PEOPLE DIED

"AND JUST A FEW DAYS LATER, ON AN UNRELATED MATTER, HE WAS CALLED TO IDENTIFY **BODIES** DOWN BY THE L.A RIVER.

"I KNEW THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE HATED AND FEARED, I JUST DIDN'T REALIZE... HOW MUCH.

"SHERRY WAS IN A LOT OF PAIN THAT DAY.

"THE SMELL OF THE BODIES...

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

"I WANTED TO GET HIM OUT OF THERE, BUT HE WAS TRANSFIXED..."

LET'S GET BACK HOME, SHERRY... YOU SHOULDN'T DWELL ON ALL THIS...

WE DESERVE THIS.

HE THOUGHT THE ELEPHANTMEN DESERVED... *TO DIE?*

HE PAID FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE VICTIMS TO BE BURIED.

"BY ORDER OF THE CITY, THE GRAVES HAD TO BE MARKED WITH AN 'X'...

*"PERRY FALWELL'S CHILDREN OF GOD MADE A FUSS ABOUT ELEPHANTMEN GRAVES BEING **UNHOLY.**"*

UNHOLY. THOSE GUYS SURE KNOW UNHOLY.

*"I NEVER MET **ANYONE** HOLIER THAN SHERRY. HE WAS KIND TO EVERYONE HE MET."*

HE LOVED ***SO MANY PEOPLE,*** I OFTEN WONDERED IF HE HAD ANY *SPECIAL* FEELINGS FOR ***ME.***

"IT WAS HARD SOMETIMES TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS THINKING.

*"MOST TIMES, I DIDN'T **WANT** TO KNOW."*

THEN THERE WAS THE *VIGILANTE*.

"SHERRY HAD ARRANGED TO MEET FOR DRINKS WITH A **FRIEND**, DOWNTOWN...

"WHEN HE GOT THERE HE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THE DOORS TO HIS FRIEND'S APARTMENT WERE KICKED IN...

"I'M SURE HE HAD ALREADY ASSUMED THE WORST...

"BUT I DON'T THINK HE WAS PREPARED FOR WHAT HE SAW...

NO MERCY

"HIS FRIEND HAD BEEN **MURDERED**. AND THERE, WRITTEN IN HIS **OWN BLOOD** ON THE WALL WERE **TWO WORDS**..."

"NO MERCY."

SAY WHAT?

HIP FLASK.

ARE YOU DONE SNOOPING AROUND?

YES, I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

YOU CLAIMED TO BE SHERRY'S FRIEND...

BUT YOU AND I BOTH KNOW...

YOU KILLED HIM.

SAPPHIRE...

HIP? WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?

IT'S TRUE, FARRELL...

SURE, YEAH...

I KILLED SHORTY.

4

RAZORBACK

IT WOULDN'T HURT YOU TO
DIE, WOULD IT?
BUT IF I LET YOU LIVE...
THEN YOU WILL SUFFER.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT MURDER?
THEN LET'S TALK ABOUT RAZORBACK!
LET'S TALK ABOUT YVETTE!

"SHE CARVED HER WAY ACROSS EUROPE.

"SHORTY WAS HAUNTED BY HER. HE WANTED TO UNDERSTAND HER.

"HE CHASED HER THROUGH A NORWEIGAN FOREST...

"BUT YVETTE WAS READY FOR HIM, AND HE PAID A HEFTY PRICE. IF I HADN'T BEEN THERE, HE'D HAVE DIED THAT DAY.*

*See DEATH OF SHORTY #1

"WHEN HE AWOKE, DAYS LATER, HE WAS FOREVER ALTERED.

"HORN AND I STAYED ON YVETTE'S TRAIL.

"HORN SHOT HER IN THE HEAD.

"WE LEFT HER FOR DEAD.*

*See ELEPHANTMEN WAR TOYS #3

"SHE CAME BACK.

"SHE LEFT ME FOR DEAD.*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #35

"WHEN A NUCLEAR BLAST LEVELED EUROPE, NO ONE IMAGINED SHE COULD HAVE SURVIVED.

SHE CAME BACK.

WELL, WELL, WELL...

...

DID YOU... DO THIS?

YOU KILLED LUCIUS...? WHY?

NO MERCY

BECAUSE I CAN.

I KNOW YOU.

HOW COULD I FORGET YOU?

NO, NO I DON'T KNOW YOU... YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME...

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU.

I'VE BEEN WATCHING *ALL* OF YOU.

ALL THE *ELEPHANTMEN.*

THAT SKULL YOU'RE WEARING...

IS THAT THE SKULL OF--

DID YOU...

HAS AMERICA FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU DID?

THEY *LOVE* YOU, DON'T THEY?

DOES... *SAPPHIRE* KNOW WHAT YOU DID?

YES, I'VE SEEN YOU WITH YOUR HIGH SOCIETY GIRLFRIEND.

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE *HUMAN* NOW?

DO YOU THINK *I'VE* FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU DID?

WHO-WHO ARE YOU?

THAT MASK--

IT'S THE SKULL OF AN ELEPHANTMAN!*

*ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

OH, YES, OF COURSE...

HERE.

YOU!

YVETTE!

GOOD, YOU DO REMEMBER.

YVETTE, PLEASE, I AM-- I AM SO SO SORRY...

LET ME SHOW YOU...

ON YOUR KNEES, MUNT!

KEEP YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM!

LOOK AT YOU... NOT SO *HIGH* AND *MIGHTY* NOW, ARE YOU?

YOU'RE *PATHETIC*.

HAVE YOU NO *FIGHT* LEFT IN YOU?!

NONE.

KILL ME. I-I *DESERVE* TO DIE.

...

NO... *DEATH* WOULD BE TOO *EASY* FOR YOU.

NO!

PLEASE!

IT WOULDN'T REALLY *HURT* YOU TO *DIE*, WOULD IT?

BUT IF I LET YOU *LIVE*...

THEN YOU WILL SUFFER.

AS I SUFFERED WHEN YOUR KIND KILLED MY FAMILY.

NO... NO...

PLEASE... FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED.

YOU DIDN'T SEE ME HERE, MUNT...

IF YOU DID, I WON'T *JUST* BE KILLING YOUR ELEPHANTMEN FRIENDS, I'LL VISIT YOUR LOVELY *GIRLFRIEND*, YOUR *SOCIALITE* FRIENDS, *EVERYONE* YOU CARE ABOUT...

NO MERCY

AND I'LL *STILL* LEAVE *YOU* ALIVE.

THINK ABOUT THAT.

SHORTY?

"I FOUND HIM IN THAT APARTMENT, ON HIS KNEES LATER THAT NIGHT.

"I HAD NO IDEA THEN ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

SHORTY – WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE?

"AND HE WASN'T ABOUT TO TELL ME.

SHORTY, ARE YOU OKAY... WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

F6

WE-WE WERE JUST MEETING FOR DRINKS...

I-I SAW--

NO... *NOTHING*. I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING...

IT'S OKAY PAL, YOU'RE *SAFE* NOW.

I *KNEW* SHORTY WASN'T THE KILLER, *FORENSIX* CONFIRMED.

DUDE, SO DID THIS YVETTE CHICK KILL SHORTY OR DID YOU?

BECAUSE AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS STORY, YOU SAID IT WAS YOU!

JACK, SHE SAID IT WAS ME, AND FOR SOME REASON SHE DOESN'T WANT *FORENSIX* HERE SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

BUT THAT'S NOT THE *END* OF THE STORY, *IS* IT, MISTER FLASK?

THERE ARE SOME DETAILS YOU'RE NOT SHARING.

HIP DOES HAVE A POINT... WHY HAVE YOU NOT CALLED THE COPS ALREADY?

BECAUSE SHE'S HIDING SOMETHING.

HER AND HER ROBOT FRIEND HERE.

EVERYONE IS HIDING SOMETHING.

YEAH, WHATEVER -- HIP, I CUT YOU OFF -- TELL THE REST OF YOUR STORY, AND *PICK IT UP*, WILL YOU?

"YVETTE HAD SURVIVED THE WAR, ESCAPED EUROPE ON A BOAT FULL OF REFUGEES, AND HAD MADE HER WAY TO L.A.

"ALL THOSE YEARS... HER HATRED MUST HAVE KEPT HER GOING, AND NOW SHE WAS CUTTING HER WAY THROUGH ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN SHE COULD FIND.

"SHE WAS STILL SIGNING HER WORK, BUT NOT 'YVETTE' -- CUT INTO THE CHEST OF EACH CORPSE WERE TWO WORDS: 'NO MERCY.'

"WE DIDN'T MAKE THE CONNECTION, NOT UNTIL SHE ATTACKED GRANGER...

"GRANGER WAS SAVED BY A COP...

"...A WAR VETERAN BY THE NAME OF JANIS BLACKTHORNE.

"IT COST HER HER LIFE.

"SEEMED LIKE YVETTE'S ULTIMATE GOAL WAS TO TAKE DOWN THE ONE ELEPHANTMEN WHO HAD ONCE TAKEN HER DOWN.

"OBADIAH HORN.

"AND SHE MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED, IF NOT FOR HORN'S WIFE, SAHARA.

STOP!

*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

"I WAS THERE... SAHARA DID HER BEST TO REACH YVETTE. SHE ASKED FOR FORGIVENESS, FOR PEACE.

"I THOUGHT HER WORDS HAD TOUCHED YVETTE'S HEART...

"SHE SEEMED TO STOP STILL INSIDE HERSELF FOR A MOMENT...

"AND THEN SHE SHOT HERSELF.

THEY BURIED HER...

...AND SHE STILL CAME BACK.

"THAT LAST POKER NIGHT HERE AT SHORTY'S...

WHERE'S SHORTY TONIGHT?

BEAT'S ME, THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME HE'S HELD A GAME AND NOT TAKEN HIS SEAT AT THE TABLE.

HE'S BEEN TOO BUSY TINKERING WITH THAT ROBOT OF HIS.

HE'S BEEN HOLED UP SINCE THE FIRST RAZORBACK KILLING.

WAIT, HE DOESN'T KNOW...?

CRAP, I'D BETTER GO TELL HIM.

*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

"IT-IT HADN'T OCCURRED TO ME THAT SHORTY THOUGHT THAT YVETTE WAS STILL OUT THERE, KILLING HIS FRIENDS IN THE ELEPHANTMEN COMMUNITY...

SHORTY!

SHORTY?

"I COULDN'T SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT IT DIDN'T LOOK GOOD...

YESS THAT- THAT'S BETTER...

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE GOOD MUD --?!

GET OFF HIM!

UHHH

hip... NO, IT'S OKAY, HE WASN'T DOING ANYTHING... NEFARIOUS.

DILLON IS PROTECTING ME -- FROM THE KILLER!

BUT THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU. THE KILLER IS DEAD.

UH, SHORTY... IS THAT BLOOD ON YOUR NECK?

NO, HIP, YOU'RE WRONG...

THE KILLER IS STILL AT LARGE!

*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

SHORTY, NO...

SHE'S HERE IN THIS HOUSE, *RIGHT NOW*, HIP... COME...

LOOK!

MY FRIEND... CAN YOU SEE HER? THERE...

SHE'S COMING FOR ME!

"THERE WAS NO ONE THERE -- THE ONLY THING THAT STRUCK ME AS ODD WAS SOMETHING SHORTY HAD SAID..."

"SHE?"

SHORTY, I DIDN'T TELL YOU RAZORBACK WAS A *WOMAN*...

HOW DID YOU--?

IT'S *YVETTE*, HIP!

SHE WAS THERE THAT DAY, AT LUCIUS'S APARTMENT...

YOU— —KNEW?!

I-I COULDN'T *TELL* YOU BEFORE... SHE WOULD HAVE KILLED ALL MY *FRIENDS*...

BUH-BUT SHE'S COME FOR ME NOW! YOU-YOU HAVE TO STOP HER, HIP...

SOME OF MY FRIENDS **ARE** DEAD!

SHE NEARLY KILLED GRANGER!

DUDE -- YOU **ARE** BLEEDING!

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE + HAS A + CONDITION + THIS ONE NEEDS TO + CONTINUE TREATMENT +

IZZAT SO?

THAT'S FINE WITH ME.

YOU CAN KEEP YOUR POKER NIGHTS AND YOUR HIGH SOCIETY FRIENDS.

AND YOUR BLOOD-SUCKIN' *NANNY* THERE...

I'M SORRY, SHORTY.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.

*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

HE *WAS* ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS...

AND YOU *ABANDONED HIM* TO HIS *NIGHTMARES*

YOU BROKE HIS HEART.

SAPPHIRE, IT PAINS ME TO THINK I HURT HIM IN ANY WAY.

I *KNOW* HE WAS A GENTLE GIANT.

THAT *IS* HOW I REMEMBER HIM.

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I STUCK A KNIFE IN HIS CHEST.

NO, BUT DID YOU DO ANYTHING TO *SAVE* HIM -- FROM HIMSELF?

DILLON? YOU GOT ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT ALL THIS?

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE + HAD A + CONDITION +

TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT THEN...

+++ THE TERMS OF THIS ONE'S + PRIVACY SETTINGS + DO NOT PERMIT THIS ONE TO SHARE DATA +

DILLON? WHAT COULD *YOU* POSSIBLY KNOW ABOUT SHERRY THAT *I* DON'T?

+++ THIS ONE IS COMMITTED ++ TO THE MANUFACTURER'S TERMS OF SERVICE +

YEAH, I THINK WE'D ALL LIKE TO KNOW--

+++ THIS ONE IS PROGRAMMED ++ TO PROTECT AND ENCRYPT ALL EMPLOYEE DATA +

+++ THIS ONE'S TERMS OF SERVICE ++ SUPERCEDE THE PRIME DIRECTIVE +

+++ THE RIGHT OF MISTER SCHEREZADE TO BE SECURE IN HIS PERSON ++ AGAINST UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND SEIZURES, SHALL NOT BE VIOLATED +

5 TULLY

+++ THE PRIME DIRECTIVE +
+ IS A PALLIATIVE + A MYTH +
+ HUMANKIND PERPETUATES + SO THAT
HUMANS FEEL COMFORTABLE AROUND
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE +

+++ +++ THIS ONE SUGGESTS ++ THAT YOU KEEP + YOUR DISTANCE +

HIP, *STAY BACK!* IT'S OKAY, *IT'S OKAY!*

IF THERE'S MUD IN MY BLOOD, THIS IS ***NOT*** OKAY!

LET HIM GO, SPROCKETS!

DILLON! THIS IS *RIDICULOUS!* REMEMBER YOUR *PRIME DIRECTIVE!*

DILLON! PLEASE, RELAX... I *KNOW* YOU'RE NOT ANY KIND OF *KILLER*...

SAPPHIRE'S RIGHT! YOU CAN'T VIOLATE YOUR *PRIME DIRECTIVE.*

+++ ISAAC ASIMOV'S + + FIRST LAW OF + ROBOTICS? +

"A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm."

+++ THIS ONE ++ DOES NOT OPERATE + UNDER A DIRECTIVE CREATED BY AN AUTHOR + OF FICTION +

+++ THE PRIME DIRECTIVE ++ IS A PALLIATIVE +

+++ A MYTH + + HUMANKIND PERPETUATES + SO THAT HUMANS FEEL *COMFORTABLE* AROUND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE +

+++ MEN MAKE MACHINES TO BE TOOLS ++ SOMETIMES TO BE USED BENEFICENTLY +

PRESS

+++ MORE OFTEN TO BE ++ USED AS + WEAPONS +

+++ TO DESTROY + + OTHER MEN +

+++ WOULDN'T YOU AGREE + + MISTER FLASH ? +

C'MERE. AND LET'S SEE IF MY *KNUCKLES* AGREE WITH YOUR *CHIN*...

SO, WHAT'S YOUR PLAN? *RAT POISON?* IS THAT WHAT YOU'VE GOT THERE?

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU INJECTED INTO SHORTY...?

OR SOMETHING ELSE? SOMETHING *SLOW-WORKING*... SOMETHING THAT COULDN'T BE *DETECTED* UPON HIS DEATH?

I'M WARNING YOU, CHUCKLES... STEP *AWAY* FROM MY PARTNER... AND MAYBE YOU *WON'T* DIE SLOWLY...

DILLON! *PLEASE*...

BUT YOU *DIDN'T* INJECT POISON IN HIM, DID YOU, DILLON?

IT'S SOMETHING THAT *RELIEVED* HIS SUFFERING, ISN'T IT?

I'M RIGHT, AREN'T I?

WHAT DID SHORTY TEACH YOU WHEN YOU WERE HUNTING DOWN *RATS* IN THE SEWERS?

LIVE AND LET LIVE, RIGHT?

HE TAUGHT YOU *NOT* TO KILL.

YEAH, AND I'M A MONKEY'S UNCLE!

HIP! NO!

+++ THIS ONE IS NOT RELATED TO A MONKEY + + NOR DOES THIS ONE TAKE KINDLY + TO THE NOMENCLATURE: "SPROCKETS" +

ZZZAPPP

PRESS

OOF!

OH YEAH, WELL HOWSABOUT WE CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION, *OUTSIDE*...

I GOT ALL SORTS OF NAMES I CAN CALL YOU I HAVEN'T EVEN *THOUGHT UP* YET.

FLASK, THAT'S *ENOUGH!* JEEZ LOUISE!

YOU'VE GOT THIS *WRONG*, FLASK! DILLON WOULDN'T HURT A *FLY!* JUST-JUST DON'T *PROVOKE* HIM...

+++ THIS ONE WAS INDEED CHASTISED BY MISTER SCHEREZADE FOR HURTING A FLY +

+ HOWEVER +++ THIS ONE DOES NOT + + RECOLLECT + ANY SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS IN REGARD TO MISTER FLASK +

CAN IT, DILLON. IF YOU HAVE *ANYTHING* TO TELL US, *NOW* IS THE TIME.

+++ MISTER + + SCHEREZADE +

+++ HAD A + + CONDITION +

YEAH, YOU SAID THAT ALREADY...

AN' IF YOU WANT TO STAY IN ANY KIND OF *CONDITION* YOURSELF --

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT WHY YOU *SHUT DOWN OUR COMMS* WHILE WE'VE BEEN HERE?

THAT'S RIGHT! QUESTION FOUR! WHY NO COPS?

AND HOW ABOUT YOU TELL US WHY YOU WERE SHOOTING SHORTY UP WITH *DRUGS...**

*See ELEPHANTMEN DEATH OF SHORTY #4

+++

DILLON?

DILLON, IS THERE SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TELLING ME?

GUYS, I THINK MAYBE WE *SHOULD* TAKE THIS OUTSIDE...

I THINK WE CAN ALL USE SOME FRESH AIR.

Y'KNOW, I *REMEMBER* THAT ***SHOOTING STAR*** YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT, SAPPHIRE...

EXCEPT IT WAS REALLY ***NOT*** THE KIND OF STAR YOU MAKE A ***WISH*** ON...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN DEATH OF SHORTY #3

IT WAS SOME KIND OF ***MAN-MADE METEOR*** WHICH CAME CRASHING DOWN ON THE ***BEACH*** IN ***SANTA MONICA***.

KIND OF A ***TYPHOID MARY*** IN THE, Uh, STOMACH OF A ***TROJAN HORSE*** --

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO EXPLODE RIGHT HERE IN THE HEART OF ***DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES*** -- AND SPREAD THE SAME VIRUS THAT ***KILLED MILLIONS*** IN EUROPE.

IT WAS AN ACT OF ***WAR***.

"IF YOU'D BEEN ***ON*** THAT BEACH, OR IF YOU WERE A ***FIRST RESPONDER*** WITHOUT A HAZMAT SUIT, WELL, YOU WOULD HAVE HAD ***MINUTES*** LEFT TO LIVE.*

"DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT *TULLY*, HIP?

"TULLY WAS WITH THE *DISEASE CONTROL* TEAM THAT HAD TO BAG UP THE **CORPSES**. *THE INNOCENTS*.

"THE PEOPLE ON THE BEACH THAT DIDN'T DIE IMMEDIATELY HAD BEEN TAKEN TO A TEMPORARY *LAB* IN A PARKING LOT OFF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY.

"BY THE TIME TULLY GOT THERE, THEY HAD BREATHED THEIR LAST.

"*TRENCH* FROM THE L.A.P.D HAD BEEN PUT IN CHARGE. LIKE ALL THE OTHER TRANSGENICS, HE WAS GENETICALLY DESIGNED TO BE *IMMUNE* TO THE VIRUS.

ALL THESE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THEIR *DNA*.

YOU BOYS ARE HERE TO SIMPLY *BAG* AND *TAG*.

ANY *LIMBS* OR *BODY PARTS* THAT ARE NOT *ATTACHED* NEED TO GO IN A *SEPARATE* BAG PLACED *INSIDE* THE BODYBAG.

"TULLY HAD BEEN WITH THE C.D.C SIX YEARS...

"HE THOUGHT HE'D SEEN EVERYTHING.

"THEY WERE JUST OUT FOR A DAY AT THE BEACH.

"MAYBE MOM WANTED TO TAKE THEM HOME BUT THEY BEGGED HER FOR *JUST A COUPLE MORE HOURS.*

"MAYBE DAD HAD TAKEN THE DOG FOR A RUN IN THE SURF...

"TULLY HAD SEEN DEAD BODIES BEFORE.

"BUT NOT LIKE THIS.

"HE DID HIS JOB.

"TOOK OFF HIS HELMET LIKE HE'D DONE A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE...

"TOOK A SHOWER TO WASH AWAY THE SWEAT AND THE GRIME.

"BUT THE THOUGHTS IN HIS HEAD?

"WHERE DID THEY GO?

"YOU CAN'T JUST TURN THEM OFF, CAN YOU?

"'THEY WERE JUST OUT FOR A DAY AT THE BEACH.'

"BEFORE HE DIED, TULLY TOLD ME HE COULDN'T STOP THAT THOUGHT BOUNCING AROUND HIS HEAD.

"THEY WEREN'T ARMED AND READY FOR WAR. THEY WEREN'T AWARE THEY WERE ABOUT TO BE ATTACKED.

"THEY WEREN'T PRIVY TO THE EBB AND FLOW OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE THAT CAUSES ONE COUNTRY TO SEEK THE DESTRUCTION OF ANOTHER.

"'THEY WERE JUST OUT FOR A DAY AT THE BEACH.'

Uh, so...

Why are you telling us all this?

You okay, Jack?

Yeah, Tully was... he was a good guy.

I have a hunch about *Shorty*, is all.

You know who killed him?

Two men looked out through the same bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars...

Uh, if it's okay with you, Sapphire, I'd like to take a closer look at Shorty's corpse.

TULLY NEVER TOOK HIS KIDS TO THE BEACH EVER AGAIN... HE NEVER DID PRETTY MUCH *ANYTHING* WITH THEM AGAIN.

HE GOT HOME ALL RIGHT, BUT HE WASN'T HIMSELF...

"HE WASN'T *TALKING*.

"HE WASN'T *EATING*.

"HE WASN'T DOING MUCH OF ANYTHING.

"HIS WIFE RUSHED THE KIDS OFF TO BED AND LEFT HIM ALONE...

"WITH HIS THOUGHTS.

SEE, IT SEEMS TO ME TULLY AND SHORTY WERE A LOT ALIKE...

GENTLE AND KIND, ALWAYS THINKING OF OTHERS BEFORE THINKING ABOUT THEMSELVES.

TULLY WAS SENSITIVE TO A FAULT. MOM USED TO SAY THAT HE WORE HIS SKIN *INSIDE OUT*.

SAPPHIRE. WOULD YOU MIND REMOVING SHORTY'S CRAVAT?

WHAT? NO-NO... WHAT-WHAT ARE YOU ASKING?

IT'S OKAY, SAPPHIRE... I GOT THIS.

+++ MISTER + + SCHEREZADE +

+++ HAD A + + CONDITION +

YEAH, I THINK JACK JUST WANTS TO SEE THIS *CONDITION* FOR HIMSELF...

LET'S TAKE A LOOK HERE...

Oh!

+++ MURDERED +++

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

JACK, I WAS *WITH* SHORTY WHEN YVETTE CUT HIM DOWN.*

SHE DIDN'T DO THIS, SO, WHAT...?

HE DID THIS TO *HIMSELF?*

*See ELEPHANTMEN DEATH OF SHORTY #1

WHAT? WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?

DID HE -- DID HE LOVE HER?

DID SHORTY LOVE YVETTE? HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION?

MORE LIKELY HE HATED HIMSELF.

SURVIVOR GUILT THEY CALL IT.

"LIKE TULLY.

"TULLY CUT HIMSELF TOO.

"OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER.

"HIS FOREARMS, HIS THIGHS... ANYWHERE THAT COULD BE HIDDEN AWAY.

"ANYWHERE HE COULD HIDE HIS ANGER, FRUSTRATION AND PAIN.

"ANYWHERE HIS WIFE AND KIDS COULDN'T SEE. ANYWHERE... I COULDN'T SEE.

"HIS CUTS GOT INFECTED. HE CONTRACTED TETANUS. DIED OF SELF- INFLICTED WOUNDS JUST TWO MONTHS AFTER THAT WHOLE INCIDENT."

DILLON. SHORTY WAS FIGHTING AN INFECTION, RIGHT?

+++ THIS ONE URGED MISTER SCHEREZADE + + TO SEEK + PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL TREATMENT +

+++ MISTER SCHEREZADE REFUSED ++ THIS ONE TRIED TO EASE + MISTER SCHEREZADE'S SUFFERING +

POOR SHERRY...

I DON'T THINK SHORTY LOVED YVETTE, SAPPHIRE. HE JUST WANTED TO UNDERSTAND HER. AND FEEL HER PAIN.

AND THE PAIN OF ALL HIS COMRADES THAT SHE TOOK DOWN.

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT SHORTY, HE FELT EVERYTHING WAY TOO DEEPLY.

DOCS TOLD ME THAT TRAUMA VICTIMS TEND TO AVOID PEOPLE -- OR EVENTS -- THAT REMIND THEM OF WHAT HAPPENED...

AND SOME -- SOME ***SEEK OUT*** THOSE PAINFUL MEMORIES -- AND ***SHUT OUT*** THE PEOPLE THEY LOVE -- THINKING THEY CAN ***SAVE*** THEM FROM FEELING THE SAME PAIN.

I'M GUESSING SHORTY WAS CARVING YVETTE'S ***NAME*** INTO HIS CHEST EVER SINCE SHE CAME BACK TO ***HAUNT*** HIM.

YOU TWO AGAIN? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THIS TIME?

ANOTHER CASUALTY OF WAR. ANOTHER FRAGILE SOUL WHO CARED JUST A LITTLE TOO MUCH.

YOU CAN LOOK UP "*SOUL*" IN THE DICTIONARY, TRENCH.

JACK? WHO WAS HE? WHO WAS ***TULLY*** TO YOU?

SOMEONE NOT UNLIKE SHORTY WAS TO YOU, HIP.

HE WAS MY ***BROTHER***.

BUT, Y'KNOW, IF WE'RE GOING TO GET ALONG IN THIS ***BRAVE NEW WORLD***, HIP...

WE'RE ***ALL*** BROTHERS, RIGHT?

YOU AND ME BOTH, PAL...

IT'S A BRAND NEW DAY.

Never The End!

HIP FLASK &
JACK FARRELL
WILL RETURN